

New Light on New Lighting

The outdoor porch or post lamp is one of light fixtures in a home with the highest use, and is the perfect place to install ENERGY STAR qualified lighting products. The same is true for sconces typically installed on either side of the garage door. Many compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) will fit easily into existing light fixtures. You may want to consider installing a new ENERGY STAR qualified outdoor fixture that saves energy through advanced CFL technology, with a motion sensor and/or a photocell that turns the light on only when someone is present or on at night and off in the morning.



If installing new fixtures, keep in mind that outdoor wiring must always be grounded as well as rated "water-resistant and UL approved for outdoor use." Fixtures rated for interior use should not be used outdoors, and pool and fountain lights require fixtures specifically rated for use in or around water.

Solar lights can be used to light walkways or stairs and consume no electricity. Solar energy is not simply renewable, but also inexhaustible. In addition to improved technology, prices and styles are more attractive today than they were a decade ago. Today's solar lights are brighter and use light emitting diodes (LED) or fluorescent bulbs. Although a solar light is not likely to provide enough light for you to read a book, they work well to provide indirect illumination and accent lighting.

Keep in mind that traditional light bulbs will be phased out in 2012. By law, bulbs must be 30 percent more efficient than current incandescent versions beginning that year. According to the EPA's Energy Star website (energystar.gov), the phase-out will start with 100-watt bulbs in January 2012 and end with 40-watt bulbs in January 2014. By 2020, a second tier would become effective, requiring all bulbs to be at least 70% more efficient (effectively equal to today's compact fluorescent light bulbs or CFLs).

